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Museum Opens at Site of Kennedy Slaying in Dallas

From Associated Press

DALLAS—Prayers and tears marked the opening Monday of a museum on the sixth floor of the old Texas School Book Depository from which Lee Harvey Oswald is believed to have fired the shots that killed President John F. Kennedy.

Some came to put behind them that November day a quarter-century ago when Kennedy was assassinated. Others came to recall the legacy and hope of his Administration.

"Our purpose is not to preserve the memory of that death. . . . It is not in our power to preserve what already lives so powerfully any more than we could erase or escape this history," Dallas County Judge Lee F. Jackson said at the opening ceremony of The Sixth Floor museum.

"The lessons of history found here will be passed, like a torch, to all generations."

The Rev. G. James Christopher, of the St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, said: "About 26 years ago America was wounded. But today we stand here whole again."

Several hundred invited guests attended the opening ceremony on President's Day, then viewed the collection examining Kennedy's life and death.

The exhibit in what is now the Dallas County Administration Building contains 350 photographs, 30 artifacts, a 30-minute audio tour and six films running a total of 40 minutes. It was organized by the Dallas County Historical Foundation.

For many, the tears fell when they came to the window where investigators said Oswald ate his lunch on Nov. 22, 1963, and waited for the presidential motorcade as it moved through streets lined with cheering crowds.

"I guess that's when it hit me," said Danny Veno, 33, of Dallas. "I got a big lump in my throat when I saw this window. I've waited a long time to see this. A long, long time."

That corner window is walled off by glass. Stacks of books and boxes are arranged just as they were more than 25 years ago. Visitors gathered at windows a few feet away and stared down at Elm Street, sharing the view of the sniper.

"It took me back, that view, it really did," said Pat Radmacher, 38, of Grandbury.